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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over~~ managing inventory supply in a network environment, comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device at a buyer system, said signal indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by an on-hand quantity of said product;

receiving a demand note from said buyer system requesting restocking of said product, wherein said demand note was created in response to said signal and includes a requested quantity;

querying a local inventory database for a supply availability status in response to said demand note; ~~wherein said querying causes said vendor-managed inventory tool to:~~

transmitting said demand note to a local inventory system for said restocking of said product when;

wherein said querying a local inventory database indicates that said sufficient requested quantities of said product is/are locally available at said buyer system;

-and

querying a vendor inventory system for said supply availability status when said querying a local inventory database indicates that said requested quantity of said product is not locally available at said buyer system;

transmitting a purchase order to said vendor inventory system when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity of said product is available from a storage location associated with said vendor, said purchase order including said product and said requested quantity;

check supply levels of said product in vendor system storage;

check supply levels of said product in vendor warehouse storage under consignment;

transmit a notice to said buyer system where said supply levels of said product in said vendor system storage or said vendor warehouse storage are sufficient to meet requirements specified in said purchase order; and

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transmitting said purchase order to a factory for manufacture of said product, where when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity is not available from a storage location associated with said vendor, supply levels are insufficient to meet said requirements specified in said purchase order;

wherein said querying indicates that insufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system in accordance with an adopted business rule, and implemented via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product to control said requested quantity via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

4. (Currently Amended) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for managing inventory supply in providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over a network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device at a buyer system indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by an on-hand quantity of said product;

receiving a demand note from said buyer system requesting restocking of said product, wherein said demand note was created in response to said signal and includes a requested quantity;

querying a local inventory database for a supply availability status in response to said demand note; wherein said querying causes said vendor-managed inventory tool to:

transmitting said demand note to a local inventory system for said restocking of said product when said querying a local inventory database indicates that said requested quantity of said product is locally available at said buyer system;

wherein said querying indicates that sufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system; and

querying a vendor inventory system for said supply availability status when said querying a local inventory database indicates that said requested quantity of said product is not locally available at said buyer system;

transmitting a purchase order to said vendor inventory system when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity of said product is available from a storage location associated with said vendor, said purchase order including said product and said requested quantity; and

check supply levels of said product in vendor system storage;

check supply levels of said product in vendor warehouse storage under consignment;


transmit a notice to said buyer system where said supply levels of said product in said vendor system storage or said vendor warehouse storage are sufficient to meet requirements specified in said purchase order; and

transmitting said purchase order to a factory for manufacture of said product; where when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity is not available from a storage location associated with said vendor, said supply levels are insufficient to meet said requirements specified in said purchase order;

wherein said querying indicates that insufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system;

5. (Currently Amended) The storage medium of claim 4, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system in accordance with an adopted business rule, and implemented via said ~~vendor-managed inventory tool~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The storage medium of claim 4, further comprising instructions for causing said computer to implement:

 specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product to control said requested quantity, via said ~~vendor-managed inventory tool~~.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, wherein said factory manufacturing system produces said products for use by said buyer system.

9 - 11 (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method system of claim 17, wherein said further comprising facilitating vendor-managed inventory tool facilitates billing activities between said vendor system, said buyer system, said manufacturing location system and said factory warehouse, said activities including:

~~purchase order generation and transmission;~~

~~demand note generation and transmission; and~~

~~invoice generation and transmission.~~

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~system of claim 17 ~~further comprising receiving notification that said requested quantity of said product has been delivered to said manufacturing location pursuant to said demand note, wherein said vendor managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of said goods pursuant to said demand note.~~

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15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 17 ~~further comprising receiving notification that said requested quantity of said product has been delivered to said manufacturing location pursuant to said purchase order, wherein said vendor managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of goods pursuant to said purchase order.~~

16. (New) A system for managing inventory supply in a network environment, said system comprising:

a network;

a host system in communication with said network, said host system including

instructions to implement a method comprising:

receiving a signal via said network from a sensor device at a buyer system,

said signal indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a

manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by an on-hand quantity of said product;

receiving a demand note via said network from said buyer system requesting restocking of said product, wherein said demand note was created in response to said signal and includes a requested quantity;

querying a local inventory database for a supply availability status in response to said demand note;

transmitting said demand note via said network to a local inventory system for said restocking of said product when said querying a local inventory database indicates that said requested quantity of said product is locally available at said buyer system;

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querying a vendor inventory system for said supply availability status when said querying a local inventory database indicates that said requested quantity of said product is not locally available at said buyer system;

transmitting a purchase order via said network to said vendor inventory system when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity of said product is available from a storage location associated with said vendor, said purchase order including said product and said requested quantity; and

transmitting said purchase order via said network to a factory for manufacture of said product when said querying a vendor inventory system indicates that said requested quantity is not available from a storage location associated with said vendor.